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SW 310.01: Social Welfare Policy and Services

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Social Work 310 - Fall 08
Social Welfare Policies & Services
TR 12:40 - 2:00 pm GBB 205

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Social work is a profession that requires an understanding of how public policies are made and the ability to influence the political decision-making process. The field has a responsibility to promote social justice and shape public policy by being politically active and by mobilizing disenfranchised populations to influence decisions that impact their lives. This is a challenging prospect given our limited political clout and the power of special interest groups.

Course Description

In this course we will examine the process by which public policies are formulated and their resulting impact on various segments of American society. We will explore the role of non-governmental agencies, interest and advocacy groups and governmental agencies in resolving social problems. We also will see how different groups and individuals influence the policy-making process, both in terms of the issues that are addressed and the parameters established to deal with such issues. As we shall see, no political process is neutral in its impacts; some groups tend to benefit far more than others regarding how policies are developed and how they are implemented.

To facilitate an understanding of the political process we will review and critically analyze major social policies that impact citizens. Specific domestic policy areas will include welfare reform, child welfare, Social Security and health care. We will also focus our inquiry on policies crafted to address the needs of such marginalized groups as women and children, elderly, and the poor.

Because a democracy is not a spectator sport and engaged citizens are active participants in their communities, **you are expected to actively contribute to building knowledge in this course.** While I will share with you my perspectives, knowledge, and experiences in policy-related areas, I expect you to offer your observations and knowledge to the class. Although the classroom will be highly interactive and somewhat "laid back," it will be academically challenging.

Social Work 310 is the department's *designated writing course* and **you will be expected to present clear, concise, and well-organized written documents that**

adhere to APA guidelines. You will also be required to critique current programs as they address the needs of marginalized and traditionally oppressed populations while examining strategies to provide effective, culturally sensitive programs. Similarly, you will need to demonstrate an understanding of the values that shape policy and critically analyze how the policies affect citizens marginalized from the political decision-making process.

The class will be conducted as a seminar. Therefore, it is imperative that students come to class prepared to discuss reading assignments. I will provide material as needed, but for the most part the class will be an opportunity for us to reflect upon and analyze questions about social problems and community change through civic participation and policy development. Students are encouraged to bring their experiences as they relate to topic themes.

RELATION TO OTHER COURSES

This course builds on SW 100 and SW 200, and is generally taken concurrently with SW 300. It builds on SW350 in helping to understand how social policies impact individuals and families and provides a foundation for SW 360 in helping to understand how social policies impact services. It prepares students to understand the social policies and services they will encounter in their practicum.

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES ADDRESSED IN THIS COURSE

- PO 1 Apply critical thinking skills within the context of professional social work practice.
- PO 2 Understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards and principles, and practice accordingly.
- PO 3 Understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and apply strategies of advocacy and social change that advance social and economic justice.
- PO 4 Practice without discrimination and with respect, knowledge, and skills related to client's age, class, color, culture, disability, ethnicity, family structure, gender, marital status, national origin, race, religion, sex, and sexual orientation.
- PO 5 Demonstrate understanding of the history of the social work profession and its contemporary structures and issues.
- PO 6 Apply the knowledge and skills of generalist social work practice with systems of all sizes, while exhibiting effective practice in a range of professional social work roles.
- PO 7 Use theoretical frameworks supported by empirical evidence to understand and apply to practice individual development and behavior across the life span and the interactions among individuals and families, groups,

- organizations, and communities.
- PO 8 Demonstrate the ability to analyze, formulate, and influence social policies, including understanding the connections between social problems and social policies.
- PO 12 Demonstrate appropriate professional, ethical conduct within practice settings and contribute to positive organizational maintenance, development and change.
- PO 13 Practice the skills of the generalist social worker in rural settings and underserved areas of the Rocky Mountain West.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

At the completion of this course each student should be able to:

1. Define social policy and explain how policy is made through legislative, executive and judicial review processes.
2. Analyze social welfare policies for their functional, ethical and cultural values.
3. Appreciate the cultural, economic, historical, political, social and religious influences that impact the development, implementation and revision of social welfare policies and programs.
4. Understand and analyze major policy initiatives in the areas of income maintenance, health care, family, education, disability and civil rights.
5. Exercise critical thinking and clear writing when analyzing social welfare policies and programs.
6. Understand and articulate the impact social welfare policies and services have on social work practice, individuals, families, groups, and communities.
7. Understand the opportunities available to social workers for advocacy work in the areas of social welfare policy and program development and administration.

ASSIGNED READINGS & BOOKS

Publication manual of the american psychological association (2001). Washington: American Psychological Association.

Earley, P. (2007). Crazy: A father's search through america's mental health

madness. New York: Penguin Group.

Johnson, M. (2004). *Make them go away: clint eastwood, christopher reeve and the case against disability rights*. Louisville, KY: Avocado Press.

Additional Readings - Mansfield Library e-res system: e-res password is SW310

The Newspaper to include:

- A local source such as the Missoulian, Great Falls Tribune, Billings Gazette, etc
- A national source such as The New York Times, Washington Post, etc

ASSIGNMENTS

A. Quizzes --There will be seven quizzes over the course of the semester. Each quiz will cover designated chapters in the assigned books, library readings, and class discussions. A breakdown of the book chapters, readings and quiz dates are outlined below. One make-up quiz is allowed if your absence is excused ***before the date of the quiz.***

Crazy:

September 11 - Preface; Mike's Story 1; Mike's Story 2; Part One - The Ninth Floor;

E-res reading: *Creating the Context for Social Policy Analysis*

E-res reading: *Social Welfare Policy Research;*

September 25 - Part Two - Smoke in the Air; 3; Part Three - A Damn Cruel Disease

October 9- Part Four - Searching for a Safe Place; Part Five - Déjà vu;

Make Them Go Away:

October 23 - Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4 & 5

November 6 - Chapters 6, 7, 8, 9 & 10

November 20 - Chapters 11, 12, 13 & 14

December 2 - Chapters 15, 16, 17 & 18

B. Policy Papers - Due Dates: October 2, October 30

Students are required to complete two short policy analysis papers. The papers should not exceed five pages and must contain a minimum of three sources.

Although we will discuss the papers in class, each must include: 1) Historical overview of a current or proposed social policy (e.g., The Patriot Act, North American Free Trade Agreement, Welfare Reform, Health Care, The Indian Child Welfare Act, etc) at the federal, state or local level; 2) A detailed description of

the social problem that necessitated the development of the policy; 3) A description of the policy; 4) An analysis of the policy.

Students must cite a minimum of three references for each paper. **Students must correctly cite their sources using APA format.** Paper Length: 4-5 Pages. Further instructions will be given in class.

C. Informed Voter Paper – Due Date: November 13

As citizens of the United States and future social workers, it your responsibility to be involved in shaping public policy by being politically active. This semester you are offered an easy opportunity to do so by being an informed voter in the National and State elections on November 4. For this assignment students are required to research one ballot issue and the platforms of candidates running for the following offices:

- President of the United States
- Governor of Montana
- United States House, Montana
- United States Senate, Montana
- Montana Secretary of State
- Montana Attorney General
- Montana State Auditor

Student will write a minimum one page summary for the ballot initiative which will describe the initiative and why the passage/failure of this initiative is important to you. Additionally students will critically analyze the initiative in regard to social work professional values and the code of ethics.

Students will write a minimum one page summary for each office listed above, which will include each candidate's platform on issues of importance to you and to the social work profession and why the success/defeat of each candidate is important to you. Students will critically analyze how the candidate's views are similar to or differ from social work professional values and the code of ethics.

Paper Length: No more than two pages per ballot issue/office.

D. Proposal – Due Date: December 4

Students are required to prepare a program proposal that advances a solution to a social problem. Your paper will include: 1) Introduction; 2) Problem Statement; 3) Program Goals and Objectives; 4) Methods; 5) Evaluation; 6) A Plan for Future Funding; and 7) Budget. **Students must correctly cite their sources using APA format.** Paper Length: 7-8 Pages. Further instructions will be given in class.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASS PARTICIPATION

Attendance is required and will be taken at all class sessions. More than four absences for any reason will lower your grade. Six absences (the equivalent of three weeks) will result in a FAILING grade for the course. If the deadline for dropping courses has already passed, your alternative to a failing grade will be to gain approval for a late drop via the petition process. I will not sign such petitions unless there are legitimate reasons for the lack of attendance, reasons you must fully document. **Students are expected to participate in classroom discussions.**

POLICY FOR LATE PAPERS

All papers are to be turned in during class on the assigned day. Two points will be deducted from the final grade for each day a paper is late. No exceptions will be made. Please plan ahead.

ACADEMIC HONESTY

Students must practice academic honesty. Academic misconduct is subject to an academic penalty by the course instructor and/or a disciplinary sanction by the University.

Students need to be familiar with the Student Conduct Code. The Code is available for review online at <http://www.umt.edu/SA/VPsA/index.cfm/page/1321>.

<u>POINTS</u>	Quizzes	70
	Policy Analysis Papers	100
	Informed Voter Paper	90
	Final Paper	90
	TOTAL	350

GRADING

A	329 - 350
A-	315 - 328
B+	304 - 314
B	294 - 303
B-	280 - 293
C+	269 - 279
C	259 - 268
C-	245 - 258
D+	234 - 244
D	224 - 233
D-	210 - 223
F	0 - 209

COURSE OUTLINE

- Week 1** **Introductions; Developing Classroom Policies; The Importance of Social Policy to Social Work Practice; Examples of Social Policy; Policy Advocacy**
Aug. 26 & 28 August 28: Read e-res article "Creating the Context for Social Policy Analysis" prior to class
- Week 2** **Policy Advocacy continued; Framework for Policy Analysis; APA Writing Style**
Sept. 2 & 4 September 2: Read e-res article "Social Welfare Policy Research" prior to class
- Week 3** **Research Resources Discussion of Papers; Quiz**
Sept. 9 & 11 September 9: Class will meet in the Mansfield Library computer classroom on level two - Room 283
September 11: Quiz One
- Week 4** **Making Policy: The Political Process and Lobbying; APA Writing Style**
Sept. 16 & 18 September 16: Read E-Res article "Understanding Legal Processes"
- Week 5** **Propaganda and Persuasion**
Sept. 23 & 25 September 25: Quiz Two
- Week 6** **Modern Welfare State; Basis of Social Allocation**
Sept. 30 & Oct. 2 October 2: Policy Analysis Paper Due; Read e-res article "Common Purpose" prior to class
- Week 7** **Forms of Benefits and Services; Service Delivery Choices;**
Oct. 7 & 9 October 9: Quiz Three
- Week 8** **Poverty and Public Assistance Programs**
Oct. 14 & 16
- Week 9** **Social Security and SSI**
Oct. 21 & 23 October 23: Quiz Four
- Week 10** **SSI Continued; Health Care**
Oct. 28 & 30 October 30: Social Policy Analysis Paper Two Due
- Week 11** **Program Proposals**

Nov. 4 & 6

November 4: Election Day Holiday

November 6: Quiz Five

Week 12

Program Proposals continued

Nov. 11 & 13

November 11: Veterans Day Holiday

November 13: Informed Voter Paper Due

Week 13

The Older Americans Act and Aging Services

Nov. 18 & 20

November 20: Quiz Six

Week 14

Food and Nutrition Policy

Nov. 25 & 27

November 27: Thanksgiving Holiday

Week 15

Children's Services

Dec 2 & 4

December 2: Quiz Seven

December 4: Program Proposal Due & Class Evaluation